

calling Mr. Salvin's attention to the matter, he at once agreed that this name must be used for the species, which should in future be known as *Oceanodroma castro* (Harcourt). The synonymy should therefore stand as follows:—

Thalassidroma castro Harcourt, 'A Sketch of Madeira,' p. 123 and p. 166 (1851); id. Ann. Mag. N. H. (2) xv. p. 436 (1855) [Desertas Islands, near Madeira].

Cymochorea cryptoleucura Ridgway, Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus. iv. p. 337 (1882).

Oceanodroma cryptoleucura Grant, Ibis, 1896, p. 53 (Salvage Islands; Porto Santo); Salvin, Cat. B. Brit. Mus. xxv. p. 350 (1896).

Yours, &c.,

Nat. Hist. Museum, S.W.,
14th March, 1898.

W. R. OGILVIE GRANT.

The Nocturnal Migration of Birds.—It is to be desired that some of our British ornithologists should take up in this country the system of observing the nocturnal migration of birds that has for some years been so successfully followed in America. The mode of doing this, and the general results that have been yet obtained, have lately been described by Mr. Frank M. Chapman in a letter published in 'Science'*, to which we wish to call the special attention of those interested in the subject. If, during the migratory period, a comparatively low-power glass be focussed on the full moon, it is probable that a stream of migrants will be seen passing through the narrow angle subtended by the moon's limb. Thus, as has been described in 'The Auk' (vol. v. p. 37), at Tenafly, New Jersey, on the night of Sept. 3rd, 1887, Messrs. F. M. Chapman and J. Tatlock, Jr., using a 6½-inch equatorial, saw no less than 262 birds cross the moon's disk between the hours of eight and eleven. The vast majority of them were, of course, unrecognizable; but in some few cases the peculiarities of these nocturnal wanderers were so marked and so plainly shown that the observers thought themselves able to identify them.

* "Meteor or Bird?" By Frank M. Chapman 'Science,' n. s. vol. iv. no. 88, Sept. 4th, 1897.

The distance from the observer of the birds that cross the moon's disk not being known, the problem of computing the height at which they fly is not accurately determinable. But assuming, as may be reasonably done, that the crossing birds are at least one mile distant, and, in all probability, not more than five miles, the approximate height at which they travel may be calculated within certain limits. Of these heights Mr. Chapman has given us a table, showing that they vary from 600 to 15,100 feet in different cases. But further observations are required on this subject before much reliance can be placed on the results thus obtained. The number of the birds passing the field of view in a given time is also a subject of great importance upon which further information is wanted. On the whole it may be confidently stated that here is a practical scheme for obtaining much fresh information on the interesting subject of migration open to any one to whom the use of a good telescope at the migratory period is available.

Winter-birds in Spitsbergen.—It appears from Mr. Arnold Pike's diary, lately published in Mr. Abel Chapman's 'Wild Norway,' that even in Spitsbergen, where the sun does not rise above the horizon for nearly four months, individuals of at least four species of birds are found throughout this season. Mr. Pike, who passed the winter of 1888–89 in Dane's Gat, near Amsterdam Island (79° N. lat.), states that he saw "Tysties" on January 11th, and heard Eiders and Guillemots "crying and diving close inshore." On February 10th "Rypper's" droppings were observed. The Spitsbergen Grouse, Mr. Pike says, make long burrows in the snow, and thus reach the autumnal crop of berries and seeds stored up beneath its surface. We may therefore put down four species of birds as remaining in Spitsbergen throughout the winter:—*Lagopus hemileucurus*, *Uria mandti*, *Uria bruennichi*, and *Somateria mollissima*. To these, perhaps, the Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialis*) should be added; at any rate, it was observed on February 20th, the day on which the sun was first seen at noon.
